

Washington, D.C. -- As part of health reform, starting today seniors who hit the Medicare donut hole will receive rebates of \$250. The "donut hole" coverage gap – created by Congressional Republicans in 2003

(
[an unpaid for bill that added \\$395 billion to the deficit](#)
)

in which seniors with drug costs exceeding \$2,830 are stuck paying 100% of the cost of their drugs until they hit the catastrophic coverage threshold

. House Democrats are asking, why do Repeal Republicans want to take away these rebates, and change the law to re-open the donut hole?

· **Rep. Chris Van Hollen, Assistant to the Speaker (MD-08):** “It is becoming standard operating procedure for Washington Republicans to create problems – and then refuse to fix them. First it was the economy, then the Wall Street reform. Now, as the Affordable Care Act begins to finally close the prescription drug ‘donut hole’ – a problem the GOP created in their 2003 unpaid for Medicare bill – House Republicans have renewed their calls to repeal health care reform and keep seniors in the ‘donut hole’ and without free preventive health care. In the process, they’d put medical decisions in the hands of insurance companies rather than doctors. As usual, Republicans inside the beltway are totally out of touch with the needs of seniors, middle-class families, and small businesses. Unfortunately, Washington Republicans would rather spend all of their time undermining health care reform then help make it a success.”

· **Rep. Pete Stark, Chair of the House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee (CA-13):** “Starting today, seniors in the donut hole will start receiving \$250 checks as part of the Democrats' health reform bill. The Republican alternative: 'Cancel the checks.'”

- **Rep. Kendrick Meek (FL-17):** “Florida seniors are struggling with high prescription drug costs while paying skyrocketing premiums. The contrast is clear: Democrats are willing to tackle the problem by closing the ‘donut hole’ and issuing critical rebate checks. Republicans want to snatch these checks out of their hands, repeal health care reform, and leave seniors out in the cold.”
- **Rep. Paul Tonko (NY-21):** “Relief is finally coming to seniors who fall in the Medicare Part D ‘donut hole.’ These checks are the first step of many to put seniors and ordinary Americans first – not the profits of big insurance companies. We know that those who opposed health care reform in Congress want to repeal the new law, and steal this very valuable benefit from seniors. I will join my colleagues in fighting any effort to repeal this badly needed health reform law, which not only helps seniors, but will also provide millions of Americans with access to affordable, quality health care.”
- **Rep. Allyson Schwartz (PA-13):** “I have heard countless horror stories from seniors in my district about the donut hole. It is unconscionable that seniors living on fixed incomes are burdened with the enormous financial burden of covering all of their prescription costs. They resort to dangerous tactics like sharing medications, cutting pills in half, or skipping their prescriptions altogether. This has been a disaster for seniors, and it took a Democratic Congress and a Democratic President to finally fix it. Health reform is a huge victory for seniors on Medicare and it was a long time coming.”
- **Rep. Linda Sánchez (CA-39):** “Medicare beneficiaries will soon be receiving a rebate in the mail for \$250, but if it were up to Republicans, they would be sending it back. I hope that one day that I will no longer hear any American families say they have to choose between putting food on the table and buying their medication, and I look forward to eliminating the ‘donut hole’ completely.”

- **Rep. Dina Titus (NV-03):** “Health care reform is providing seniors with \$250 this year to help defray the high cost of prescription drugs at a time when every dollar counts for seniors on a fixed budget. As the first round of checks goes out to help seniors facing the Medicare prescription drug donut hole, Republicans continue their incessant call for the repeal of health care reform that would leave seniors facing high out-of-pocket expenses for life-saving prescription drugs. If Republicans have their way, seniors would have to choose between paying for the drugs they need or other basic necessities.”

- **Rep. Jim McDermott (WA-07):** “This Congress’ health care reform bill finally put a patch over the giant donut hole written into the Republicans’ seriously flawed legislation. Unlike my Republican colleagues did when they designed the donut hole, I’m glad the President understood the importance of considering the needs of seniors when crafting a bill intended to help them. Republicans say they want to repeal health care reform? Have at it. But good luck explaining to seniors why you think paying for prescription drugs should bring them to the brink of bankruptcy.”

- **Rep. Rosa DeLauro (CT-03):** “Last year, 46,700 seniors in Connecticut who were enrolled in Medicare fell into the prescription drug donut hole, and were without help in trying to pay for the medication they need. Now, under the new health reform law, help is on the way. These \$250 checks are just the first step in reducing seniors’ prescription drug costs, and one of many benefits for seniors included in the new health reforms. In passing the historic health reform law, we stood up against the insurance companies, and for the American people. It will ensure that not only our seniors, but their children and their grandchildren will all have access to the stable, quality, and affordable health care that will let them thrive.”

· **Rep. Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (FL-20):** “We promised seniors that we would close the Medicare prescription drug donut hole, and thanks to the new health reform law, we start closing it today. My state of Florida has the second largest number of people in the donut hole in the country and the seniors in my district are very happy that we are closing this gap in coverage that keeps so many of them from staying on their prescribed medications. When Republicans talk about repealing the health reform law, they fail to tell seniors that what they really mean is that they’d re-open the Medicare donut hole.”

###